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A FREE MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF JAPAN & TEACHERS OF JAPANESE



MICHELLE LI

*Harriton High School
 Rosemont, PA*

I cannot seem to remember everything anymore, or anything at all. My memory of the 19 days has already become a blur in my mind and it has only been about 17 days since the program has ended at the time of this writing. The emotions I felt then are all jumbled up in my heart. If I try to recall and relive them, I will only become frustrated. I can only try to describe them. Therefore I will do so for the sake of not letting this dream-like

experience become too faint in my life.

Despite all the information we were given prior to the start of the program, I had no idea what to expect during the trip. On the day I had to leave my dad behind at the airport in Philadelphia to meet people I've never seen before made me really nervous, want to go home and ditch the program. However, I can never be more glad and grateful that I went through with everything. Everything we did in preparation for going to Japan, the homeworks, the interviews, and the orientation helped ease my mind and heart greatly.

I can only describe this program in one way; it was unbelievable, something I've dreamed of doing but at the same time it was very real and fulfilling. We visited and explored many places, I was able to adapt to the surroundings of the institute. What made it really real and fulfilling was that there was not a single day we couldn't find something to do. If we wanted to go places, there were bikes to rent, and shuttle buses we could ride. Waking up each day early in the morning, I never had the desire to sleep in however tired I am. I roll out of bed each morning as early as I need to, ready to do whatever awaits. What really gave me this motivation and excitement is the 31 other participants that accompany me on the adventures each day. This program gave me the chance to not only tour Japan like most tourists, it also gave us a chance to experience life in Japan on a first hand basis, through living at the institute and the free time we were given and the homestay we were able to enjoy. Not only that, I was able to put what little I learned in Japanese classes to the test and realize how little I know.

Learning a language, as we were told over and over, is not only about learning vocab and grammar, but also about learning the culture and life from which the language is extracted and comes from. This experience allowed me to create a tie with other people that love the language, the people of Japan

the culture. Thus, I will always be connected with the language. It also inspires me to continue learning the language and culture.

When I came back, I told my mom about the manners and good parking skills of the Japanese people, and she wasn't surprised at all. First time going out with my best friend, I told her about my experiences in Japan. I told her about all the people I've met. She said I must have bonded with them and grew attached and she was right. I had a positive affect on them by showing what I've become, they will know that Japan is a place that will change people for the better.

Meeting Thomas, our chaperone, and all the other participants for the first time at the airport and hotel in LA made me try really hard to muster up the courage to greet everyone and learn everyone's name. I am a naturally quiet girl especially around strangers, but this experience changed me in a good way. I realized that meeting new people and getting to know them can be scary at first, but good things would result from our time together. Meeting new people also allowed me to be able experience and try things that I never thought I would do by myself. Having companions, I felt like I can do anything. That is something that I learned from Taylor Anderson and Monty Dickson. They make friends everywhere they go because they take the time to talk to people and make friends with them. They are able to have so much fun and experience many things in Japan is because they made lots of friends. They are able to become a part of the community and merge. During the orientation in Los Angeles, Masako Unoura san told us to write a message in plates that she handed out to us. On the plate I wrote down: "Smile and be grateful. Take a step and join the world." These words represent what I learned from them. Therefore I would like to tell them this: "Although I have met you only through others and the history you guys left behind, I hope that you will live on through the happiness of everyone. I will try to smile more often, because good will only come from it. I hope you guys will watch over us from above and smile with us.

Although, my 19 days of participation in this program has already ended, my adventure and experience with the Japanese language and culture will continue to develop with this experience as a foundation. I hope to see the people I went to Japan with and visit the places we went to in the future so I can see how they have changed and also what hasn't changed through a different light as I learn more about Japan and its language.

NIPPON THROUGH MY EYES PHOTO SUBMISSION



"Best thing ever!"

I saw this at an onsen near the institute. They were free to read! However we did not stay long enough to be able to enjoy it.

I chose this because I love manga a lot!

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5700 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 100

Los Angeles, CA 90036

P. 323.761.7510

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